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General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

94th plenary meeting
Thursday, 27 March 1997, 3.00 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/51/780/Add.4)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/51/780/Add.4, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 21 and 30 January and 4 and 12 March 1997, Ecuador and Latvia have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-first regular session of the General Assembly and organization of work

Request for the inclusion of an additional item

Note by the Secretary-General (A/51/237)

The President: In his note contained in document A/51/237, the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that, pursuant to paragraph 4 of article 13 of the statute of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, the judges shall be elected for a term of four years. By decision 47/328 of 17 September 1993, the judges were elected by the General Assembly for a term of office beginning on 17 November 1993. The term of office of the judges, therefore, expires on 16 November 1997.

It would be advisable for the election of the judges to be held as soon as possible during the current session of the General Assembly.

Accordingly, the Secretary-General has the honour to request, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-first session of an additional item entitled "Election of judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991", which is of an important and urgent character.

The Secretary-General further requests that the item be considered directly in plenary meeting.

Unless I hear any objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees that the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this item on the agenda, can be waived?

97-85314 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include an additional item in the agenda of the current session, entitled "Election of judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991"?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the additional item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

Request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 18 (b) (Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/51/102/Add.1)

The President: In his note contained in document A/51/102/Add.1, the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that he has received notification of the resignation of Mr. William Grant of the United States of America from the membership of the Committee on Contributions, and that the Assembly will therefore be required at its current session to appoint a person to fill the unexpired portion of the term of office of Mr. William Grant, that is, until 31 December 1997.

In order to enable the General Assembly to take the required action, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 18, entitled "Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions".

May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 18, entitled "Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions"?

It was so decided.

The President: Representatives are aware that this sub-item is usually allocated to the Fifth Committee. However, may I take it that the Assembly agrees that, in view of time constraints, the appointment should be made directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I therefore propose that the General Assembly proceed immediately to the appointment of a member of the Committee on Contributions.

I see no objection. We will proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 18 *(continued)*

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions

Note by the Secretary-General (A/51/102/Add.1)

The President: I should like to draw the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 2 of the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/51/102/Add.1. In that paragraph, the General Assembly is informed that the Government of the United States of America has nominated Mr. David Leis to fill the unexpired portion of the term of office of Mr. William Grant, that is, until 31 December 1997.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. David Leis as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning 27 March 1997 and ending 31 December 1997?

It was so decided.

The President: May I also take it that the Assembly decides to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 18?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 19 *(continued)*

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (Part II) (A/51/588/Add.1)

Letter from Saint Lucia (A/51/799)

The President: I request the Rapporteur of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), Mr. El Walid Doudech of Tunisia, to introduce the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

Mr. Doudech (Tunisia), Rapporteur of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: It is an honour to introduce to the General Assembly Part II of the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), document A/51/588/Add.1. This report relates to the following territories: American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands.

The report recommends the adoption of two draft resolutions. Draft resolution A is of a general nature and makes reference to General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Draft resolution B relates to each of the 11 territories I have just named.

The draft resolution expresses awareness of the special characteristics of these Territories and states that the aspirations of the peoples of the Territories should continue to serve as the basis for the determination of their future political status.

The draft resolution also recognizes that there is no alternative to the principle of self-determination, as expressed by the General Assembly in resolutions 1514 (XV), 1541 (XV) and others.

In the operative part, the draft resolution approves the tenth chapter of the report of the Special Committee and reaffirms the right of the peoples of the Territories to self-determination. It requests the administering Powers to transmit to the Secretary-General information on, *inter alia*, the wishes and aspirations of the peoples of the Territories regarding their future political status.

The draft resolution reaffirms the importance of United Nations visiting missions to the Territories, as well as the responsibility of the administering Powers for promoting the economic and social development and for preserving the cultural identity of the Territories.

The draft resolution stresses that the eradication of colonialism by the year 2000 requires the full and constructive cooperation of all parties concerned.

The draft resolution invites the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to initiate or to continue to take all necessary measures to accelerate progress in the social and economic life of the Territories.

The draft resolution requests the Special Committee to continue the examination of the question of the small Territories and to make recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

Part B of the draft resolution deals with each Territory and its status independently.

This draft resolution represents great progress in the work of the Special Committee because consensus has been reached with the administering Powers. We hope that this will be a good starting-point for fruitful cooperation with these countries with a view to achieving the goal of complete decolonization by the year 2000.

The Fourth Committee adopted this draft resolution without a vote and recommends to the General Assembly that it do likewise.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership and for your interest in the consultations between the Special Committee and the administering Powers. I would also like to thank the Chairman of the Fourth Committee, Ambassador Kittikhoun of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and the other members of the Bureau for their cooperation and support.

I would especially like to thank the Secretariat of the Fourth Committee for its input — in particular the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Amer Araim — as well as all others concerned for their remarkable work in the field of decolonization.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee which is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 5 of Part II of its report (A/51/588/Add.1). The draft resolution is entitled "Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands".

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/224).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote.

Mr. Marrero (United States of America): The United States welcomes the adoption of the resolution, as amended, on the 11 non-self-governing Territories administered by the United States and the United Kingdom. This is a milestone event, one which represents our collective effort to look ahead, to begin disposing of long-standing issues and to spare the Assembly a further, sterile debate.

Over the last few years, we have been forced to challenge the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee on draft resolutions proposed by the Committee of 24 on the Non-Self-Governing Territories administered by the United States and the United Kingdom.

We were encouraged, therefore, when the Fourth Committee Chairman, Ambassador Kittikhoun, took the initiative last fall to bring the parties together for the first time informally to discuss the Committee of 24's draft resolution dealing with the Non-Self-Governing Territories and amendments presented by us and the United Kingdom. We met with the members of the Committee of 24 in October and November. The Committee's willingness to listen and genuine desire for change matched our own.

Responding to this productive mood, and convinced that we could advance the process if we continued, our delegations proposed — and the Fourth Committee agreed — to defer action on the draft resolution and continue the informal dialogue to tackle the more difficult issues still outstanding.

From 17 January to 12 March, we and our British partners participated in nine informal sessions chaired by Ambassador Kittikhoun, including four meetings with the Chairman of the Committee of 24, Ambassador Samana, and five with the entire membership of the Committee. Today's outcome proves that it was time well spent.

Many of the representatives in this Hall were sceptical that we could reach consensus. I cannot deny that the negotiations were difficult because of the substantial differences between us. But we and our Committee of 24 interlocutors were convinced that the continuation of this informal dialogue would facilitate greater understanding. We have accomplished exactly that. In this regard, we are grateful to the General Assembly President, Ambassador Razali, for his support of the process; to Ambassador Kittikhoun, under whose leadership we persevered; to Ambassador Samana, who ably led the C-24 towards consensus; to the rest of the Special Committee for their conscientious hard work; and to the other members of the Secretariat and Bureau.

The adoption of this resolution is a significant achievement in itself, but, more importantly, it is a critical step to the next stage of the informal dialogue. For many years we had expressed dissatisfaction with the Committee of 24's annual reports on the Non-Self-Governing Territories because we believed they were not balanced. They did not adequately recognize the progress achieved in the Territories in question to move them towards acceptable options of self-determination. We are pleased that this resolution for the first time is appropriately balanced, shunning cold-war-style rhetoric and acknowledging international progress towards self-government in the Territories concerned. The resolution also recognizes that self-determination as it has evolved is not a unitary concept satisfied only by full independence, but encompasses a much broader range of acceptable options, as long as they are freely chosen through informed elections by the people affected. We believe that the spirit of cooperation, flexibility and goodwill that prevailed in our work to date will help continue to build trust and lead to closer cooperation. We are ready to continue that work.

The consensus adoption of this resolution also marks an important step towards the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. But we have a long way to go. Fundamental differences still remain between us and the Committee of 24 on the issue of the eradication of colonialism and how it relates to our Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Let me highlight our objectives as we move into the next phase of the dialogue.

Having reached consensus on this text, we are prepared to continue the informal dialogue with a view to possibly achieving resumed formal cooperation.

Having reaffirmed in principle that visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, at an appropriate time and with the agreement of the administering Power, could constitute an effective means of achieving the goals of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism by the year 2000, we are prepared to discuss with the Special Committee the modalities for such missions.

Bearing in mind our differences regarding the Special Committee's regional seminars, and in the light of our discussions with the Committee on modalities for visiting missions, we are prepared to review with the Committee the efficacy of and the need for these seminars.

Finally, we hope to consider appropriate mechanisms by which to give recognition to expressions of self-determination by the peoples of the Territories concerned, based on an informed, free and voluntary choice, with a view to removing those Territories from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

We have embarked on a process in the interest of the United Nations, the Member States and the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In doing so, we have attempted to address your view, Mr. President, that the time has come to end business as usual at the United Nations. We look forward to our continuing dialogue with the members of the Committee of 24 and hope to be able to report further progress to you in the months ahead.

Mr. Mounkhou (Mongolia): The delegation of Mongolia welcomes the consensus adoption of the resolution on Non-Self-Governing Territories. We would like to thank in this connection Ambassador Kittikhoun, Chairman of the Fourth Committee, for his dedication and initiative encouraging greater dialogue and negotiations.

My delegation has been of the view that the aforementioned issues should be resolved through commitment and cooperation between the Committee of 24 and the administering Powers, taking into account the interests of the Territories' peoples as a matter of their main concern.

We hope that the spirit of this achievement will guide the further cooperation between the Special Committee of 24 and the administering Powers in the best interests of the peoples of the Territories.

I should like to take this opportunity to express to Ambassador Kittikhoun my delegation's appreciation for his exemplary leadership of the proceedings of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

Mr. Richmond (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom delegation welcomes the adoption of the amended text of the resolution concerning a number of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, including eight which are administered by the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom fully accepts its obligations under the United Nations Charter as an administering Power.

Agreement on a consensus text was reached only after a long and complex negotiation, very ably led by the Chairman of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee. My delegation pays tribute to his efforts. We

took note of his statement to the Fourth Committee on 14 March and fully endorse his comments about the demonstration by both parties to the negotiations of a flexible and practical approach to the difficult issues which faced us. My delegation believes that the agreement which resulted was a clear vindication of the view that eventually prevailed last December endorsing the continuation of the informal dialogue between the administering Powers concerned and the Special Committee. This consensus proves that dialogue is preferable to the sterile confrontation which has marked this issue for too long.

As a result of the successful conclusion to the dialogue initiated by the Chairman of the Fourth Committee, my delegation is ready to continue informal discussions with the Special Committee. We approach these discussions with an open mind. We look forward to exploring ways in which we can reduce the levels of distrust which unfortunately remain. We believe that with perseverance and goodwill, solutions to the outstanding issues can be found. There is now a much more solid foundation of understanding between the administering Powers and the Special Committee. My delegation believes that we share a common objective; we now have the task of finding agreed methods of achieving that objective.

The resolution just adopted is a good start. It acknowledges that there are particular circumstances prevailing in the territories concerned; it accepts that there have been positive constitutional developments in some Non-Self-Governing Territories; it requests the administering Powers to provide information on democratic processes indicating the wishes and aspirations of the people of the Territories, such as elections, referendums and constitutional developments; it acknowledges that visiting missions can take place at an appropriate time and in consultation with the administering Power; and it accepts that the role of regional seminars needs to be reviewed.

My delegation is ready to discuss these and other issues which are of concern to the Special Committee. We do not expect instant results, but we believe that the sceptics who so nearly prevented continuation of this dialogue will again be proved wrong.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As was announced in a statement by the President of the General Assembly on 13 December 1996, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the delegations of the administering Powers — the United States and the United Kingdom — agreed to hold consultations under the coordination of the highly effective Chairman of the Fourth Committee, our friend, Ambassador Kittikhoun, regarding the recommendations contained in the chapter on 11 non-self-governing Territories in the Special Committee's report. The administering Powers confirmed that it was not their intention to hinder the continuation of the Decolonization Committee's work regarding the non-self-governing Territories. In accepting the dialogue, the Special Committee expressed the hope that the administering Powers would extend their cooperation to ensure that the Committee could discharge the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

In the course of the negotiations that ran from January to a few days ago, the Decolonization Committee, realistically and without scepticism, proved itself extremely flexible in order to reach an agreement on the set of amendments submitted to the draft resolution on those small Territories. Some delegations, including the Cuban delegation, were also very realistic and made a great effort to be able to join the consensus so that some kind of agreement could be reached, such as the one under consideration today by the General Assembly.

Once again the United Nations must face a great challenge in order to meet the stated objective of eliminating the last vestiges of colonialism by the fast-approaching year 2000. The peoples of the non-self-governing Territories being considered by the Decolonization Committee are still awaiting action on the part of the international community, and the United Nations in particular, in order to realize their aspirations with regard to their future political status.

Once again the administering Powers have said that they stand ready to cooperate with the Decolonization Committee in the accomplishment of its tasks. As indicated in the draft resolution that was recommended by the Fourth Committee for adoption, a United Nations programme should be developed to identify the wishes of the peoples of the non-self-governing Territories regarding their political status by means of visiting missions to the Territories. Great efforts by all parties will be required — by the administering Powers as well as by the Committee — in order to reach our stated goals, and in order to do that we must work with intelligence, skill,, flexibility and, above all, political goodwill.

There can be no doubt that the decolonization process has made considerable headway. However, this

should not lead us to the erroneous and romantic belief that the work of decolonization is over. Let us take but two examples.

Puerto Rico is a territory where the number of military installations and bases are today increasing, in disregard of the will of the people. It is a nation whose language and culture must be defended every day against annexation, discrimination and absorption. Its people has defended its independence through 100 years of colonialism, and the regrettable completion of those 100 years of colonialism should at least serve to mobilize world consciousness so that the Puerto Rican people can freely determine its own destiny.

Ten years ago the people of Guam held a referendum that endorsed a Commonwealth of Guam bill that would establish a new framework for relations between the territory and the United States as administering Power. This would allow the native people of Guam, the Chamorro people, to exercise self-determination and would later allow Guam to move from Commonwealth status to another political status that only its people could decide. But protracted negotiations are still going on in the United States Congress, and hasty opinions are beginning to be heard, to the effect that there could be unconstitutional aspects to the process.

The fact that there are still peoples and Territories that are not independent and that continue to look to the international community and to count on the United Nations for the exercise of their right to self-determination is the best example of the unfinished obligation of the United Nations in this area.

The Cuban delegation, in joining today's consensus on the recommendations of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, reaffirms its steadfast position of continuing to work actively for the total elimination of all forms of colonialism. We trust that the pledge of cooperation made by the administering Powers will become a reality.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): I wish to express the views of my country on the omnibus resolution pertaining to the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands.

Let me begin by expressing my compliments to the Chairman of the Fourth Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Kittikhoun of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, for his great efforts and the responsible manner in which he presided over the negotiations between the Committee of 24 and the administering Powers — the United Kingdom and the United States — arriving at a consensus on the omnibus resolution relating to the list of non-self-governing Territories, which we have adopted.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Committee of 24 for their serious and genuine efforts in handling this very sensitive issue. With their wise counsel and cooperation we were able to synthesize the different perspectives into an acceptable formulation leading to a consensus text, thus enabling the General Assembly to take a positive decision.

I also wish to compliment the representatives of the respective administering Powers of the United States and the United Kingdom for their understanding in reaching a consensus on this omnibus resolution.

It has not been easy to arrive at a consensus due to the fact that fundamental differences still exist, and it takes effort and time to resolve them. The text before us may not be satisfactory to all members of the Committee of 24, particularly in relation to some of the critical areas of concern. However, in the spirit of cooperation, we have been able to reach an understanding on the basis that it will provide a framework upon which ongoing dialogue and cooperation between the administering authorities and the Committee of 24 will be assured. This is extremely important if we are to apply ourselves practically to the attainment of the United Nations goals specified for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism by the year 2000.

I wish to place on record that, despite great difficulties, the members of the Committee of 24 have shown flexibility and perceptiveness. They have been cautious but practical in their approach to discussing the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom and the United States. The fundamental concern of the members of the Committee of 24 is to ensure that the situation of the remaining non-self-governing Territories as colonial Territories is not defined in a way that undermines the rights of the peoples to genuinely and freely exercise their political will in determining their external political status. The only way to safeguard the interests of the peoples of the non-self-governing Territories is to ensure transparency in the implementation of the decolonization process, consistent with the legal norms of the United Nations.

We recognize the vulnerabilities of these Territories pertaining to their peculiar socio-economic, geographic and environmental circumstances, especially with reference to the many small island Territories located in the Pacific and Caribbean regions. However, these factors should not serve as an excuse to deny their right to self-determination in accordance with their political aspirations and wishes. We, the Member States of the United Nations, including the respective administering authorities, are obliged to uphold the legal norms of the United Nations to ensure that the rights of peoples are not denied or subdued for any reason. The right to self-determination is recognized by the United Nations as a fundamental right. It is also supported by other legal instruments of the United Nations system, as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and supported further by the relevant decisions and resolutions of the United Nations.

Having reached consensus on the omnibus resolution, the members of the Committee of 24 look forward to full and constructive cooperation from the respective administering authorities and to addressing the most sensitive and critical issues that are still outstanding in order to establish a practical and logical approach to implementing the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism within the given time-frame.

The members of the Committee of 24 have always called for an innovative, imaginative and practical approach to handling the question of the decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in the manner most appropriate to the particular socio-economic and environmental circumstances of the Territories and peoples concerned. This cannot be achieved without the full and constructive cooperation of all the parties concerned. We wish to emphasize in particular the importance of the cooperation of the administering Powers.

The members of the Committee of 24 fully understand that it is not our duty to prescribe a particular political status for the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. It is entirely up to the peoples of the Territories themselves to decide which political status options they wish to adopt in accordance with the legal norms of the United Nations. In this connection, the members of the Committee of 24 would like to focus on the constitutional developments in each of these Territories, because these will give a clear indication of how the peoples of the Territories concerned are moving progressively forward to a stage where they will be able to exercise their right to self-determination freely and genuinely, without interference and within a constitutional framework that meets their political aspirations and wishes.

We should also take advantage of all the goodwill that has been established so far and, in the spirit of cooperation and dialogue, focus on the constitutional developments in each of these Territories. This will enable the United Nations, working through its agencies and in cooperation with the administering Powers, to move practically towards the implementation of the decolonization process.

We are extremely pleased to indicate that the consensus we have reached on the omnibus resolution (51/224) provides an atmosphere of trust and confidence in which we can move forward to deal with the outstanding issues relating specifically to a methodology and approaches to the decolonization process that would genuinely promote the rights of peoples to determine their external political status.

We look forward to the understanding and positive cooperation of the Administering Authorities in allowing United Nations missions to visit some of their Territories in response to the specific calls of the elected leaders and representatives of the Territories concerned. This should allow the United Nations effectively to monitor and assess developments in those Territories. We have noted, however, that certain Administering Authorities have not guaranteed that they will formally cooperate with the Committee of 24. We are gravely concerned that failure to assist the elected representatives of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories fully to participate in the formal meetings of the Committee of 24 and to attend the Pacific and Caribbean regional seminars — especially in the absence of visiting missions — might make it difficult for the United Nations, working through the Committee of 24, fully to ascertain the political and constitutional status of developments in those Territories.

The Administering Authorities concerned should note that the issue of ascertaining the wishes of the peoples in relation to their political status options can be resolved only through formal recognition by the United Nations. The Administering Authorities cannot assume or allege that colonial situations have ended. Colonial situations can end only when and if the peoples of the Territories decide on their external political status on the basis of an acceptable legal standard, with the involvement of the United Nations. The element of international recognition is critical in this sense. That is why the process of ascertaining the wishes of the peoples in determining their external political status must be properly understood and accepted by the Members of the United Nations as a whole.

Finally, the members of the Committee of 24 have always called for such cooperation, and we are satisfied that the consensus on the omnibus resolution can pave the way towards greater cooperation, especially in the areas that I have outlined, to enable the United Nations to achieve its goal of eradicating colonialism in a practical and responsible manner, in the interests of the peoples of the Territories concerned.

Mr. Young (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 13 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations. CARICOM is pleased to support the omnibus resolution (51/224) concerning the political, constitutional and socio-economic development of the remaining small island Non-Self-Governing Territories, following several months of intensive consultations between the members of the Committee of 24 and the administering Powers. We wish to congratulate all parties connected with these consultations which resulted in the adoption of the resolution without a vote in the Fourth Committee on Friday, 14 March.

We regard these developments as having particular significance, since seven of the Territories referred to in the resolution are within the Caribbean region and are integral parts of many of our regional and subregional groupings, including the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States as well as the wider Caribbean Community. In fact, several of these Non-Self-Governing Territories are members of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank and, as such, share the Eastern Caribbean currency with other States of our region. The strength of these economic linkages is surpassed only by the deep family ties that exist between our islands, irrespective of the level of political and constitutional development of any particular Territory. In short, the advancement of the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories is important to the advancement of our wider Caribbean. Accordingly, our CARICOM Governments place paramount importance on an effective and sustained review process by the General Assembly and by the Economic and Social Council in respect of the relevant agenda item on assistance to the Territories by specialized agencies and other international institutions associated with the United Nations.

CARICOM also attaches the greatest importance to the recommendation made by the Economic and Social Council, at the 51st meeting of its 1996 substantive session, held on 26 July 1996, by which it requested the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations to strengthen their assistance to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

In this connection, a few comments on some of the key principles contained in the omnibus resolution are useful.

We strongly believe that, as agreed during the intensive negotiations leading to the adoption of the omnibus resolution, it is ultimately for the peoples of the Territories to determine their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. We recognize the need for programmes to educate the peoples of the Territories on their rights to self-determination in conformity with legitimate political status opinions and options, including those defined in resolution 1541 (XV).

The omnibus resolution makes reference to the goals of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, whose Plan of Action, adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 1991, contains specific provisions for the establishment of important regional seminars. The Committee of 24 subsequently held four such seminars in the Caribbean and Pacific from 1992 through 1996 — specifically in Grenada in 1992, in Papua New Guinea in 1993, in Trinidad and Tobago in 1995 and again in Papua New Guinea in 1996. These seminars represented one of the few opportunities available to the United Nations to hear first-hand the concerns of the very people whose advancement we seek to foster.

In this regard, the cooperation of the administering Powers in facilitating the participation of representatives of elected Governments of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean region in particular will facilitate the work of the Committee in reviewing the role of these seminars for ascertaining the future political status of these Territories.

Because of the importance that our Governments place on hearing from the representatives of the peoples themselves, including their democratically elected Governments as well as non-governmental organizations, we are pleased that Antigua and Barbuda has offered to host the 1997 seminar this May. We are pleased also to inform the Assembly that that Government intends to seek membership on the Committee of 24 this year.

Further, CARICOM Governments are of the view that other elements of the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism should be addressed from a regional perspective as well, in particular the review of the impact of the economic and social situation on the constitutional and political advancement of Non-Self-Governing Territories — an activity called for in the Plan of Action but never carried out. We believe that this area of activity needs to be addressed in the context of the 1997 seminar.

CARICOM countries welcome the agreement for the commencement of visiting missions, where appropriate, and look forward to the formulation of a programme in the near future for visits to some of the Territories in the Caribbean whose elected representatives have indicated that they would like such missions to take place.

The United Nations has reached a point that is critical to the history of the decolonization process and to the manner in which it will address the issue in the future.

The international community is to be commended for its sustained effort in helping to secure the self-determination of the people of Namibia and in assisting with the defeat of apartheid. This same level of commitment must be devoted to the constitutional and socio-economic development of our remaining small island Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean and Pacific as well.

The small size of these Territories does not mean that their decolonization is any less important, and the attention we have given to the fulfilment of their right to self-determination cannot — and should not — be of a lesser priority than that which we have devoted to those that have successfully completed the journey to full self-government and dignity.

Mr. Santaputra (Thailand): My delegation would like to commend and congratulate both the administering Powers and the members of the Committee of 24 for their dedication during the meaningful informal consultations to consider this delicate issue. The consultations offered an important and practical opportunity for members to address differences and to work together in a spirit of cooperation and compromise, the result of which is the resolution we have adopted today.

Thailand is of the view that the adoption of this omnibus resolution by consensus represents a very positive development — a good start to lead us into the next millennium with purpose.

Finally, Sir, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Ambassador Alounkèo Kittikhoun of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, our good neighbour, for his initiative, his unremitting efforts and his successful chairmanship of the Fourth Committee under your able presidency.

The President: In connection with the resolution just adopted by the General Assembly under agenda item 19, I should like to express my thanks to His Excellency Mr. Alounkèo Kittikhoun of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Chairman of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, for his arduous efforts and for his leadership in conducting the difficult consultations on the resolution with the other members of the Special Committee of 24 and the administering Powers concerned that brought about a successful outcome.

I should now like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/51/799, which contains a letter dated 24 January 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Saint Lucia to the United Nations addressed to me.

By his letter, the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Saint Lucia to the United Nations informs me of the desire of the Government of Saint Lucia to become a member of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

As delegations are aware, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1654 (XVI) of 27 November 1961, members of the Special Committee are nominated by the President of the General Assembly.

After consultations with regional groups, I have nominated Saint Lucia as a member of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of this nomination?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 19.

Agenda item 40 *(continued)*

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/828)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.69)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/842)

The President: I call on the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.69.

Mr. Albin (Mexico): It is an honour for me to introduce this draft resolution on behalf of the countries that are members of the Group of Friends of the Guatemala peace process, the names of which appear in the text, and of the following sponsors: Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Nicaragua, Netherlands, Panama, Portugal, Russian Federation, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

At the outset, the sponsors would like once again to express their satisfaction at the signing on 29 December last by the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace.

As can be noted, the preambular part of the draft resolution refers, *inter alia*, to various General Assembly resolutions adopted during the course of the peace process. Reference is also made to the signing of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace and, in a general manner, to the other 12 agreements signed by the parties.

The draft also notes that the General Assembly is encouraged by the progress made in the process of the verification of the ceasefire, the separation of forces and disarmament and demobilization, as authorized by Security Council resolution 1094 (1997).

The preambular part also recalls the request of the parties that the United Nations verify the agreements and the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the restructuring and extension of the mandate of the Verification Mission in Guatemala.

In its operative part, the draft resolution welcomes the report of the Secretary-General; takes note with satisfaction of the sixth report of the Director of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGA); commends the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) for their efforts in search of peace; and calls upon both parties to continue fully to comply with the commitments entered into the agreements.

The draft authorizes the renewal of the mandate of MINUGUA, to be known henceforth as the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, for a year, in accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General. It requests the Secretary-General to continue to develop appropriate means to obtain resources for the Mission within the limits of the approved budget for the current biennium.

The draft also requests the Secretary-General to submit a report and recommendations on the structure and staffing of the Mission after 31 March 1998. In this respect, I should like to draw attention to the fact that in his report, the Secretary-General includes an estimate of the costs of the Mission for the biennium 1998-1999.

Finally, the draft invites the international community to support the peace process by making contributions, either to the Trust Fund or by other means.

The Government of Guatemala, the URNG and the United Nations have again demonstrated to the world the effectiveness of dialogue and negotiation as the best means of resolving differences. The foundation has been laid for a new stage in the history of Guatemala, characterized by harmony, understanding and new frameworks for institutional, economic and social development. The sponsors trust that the international community will continue generously to support this process, both politically and economically.

Accordingly, we call upon the General Assembly to adopt unanimously the draft resolution before it today, contained in document A/51/L.69.

Mr. Berteling (Netherlands): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union to address draft resolution A/51/L.69 on the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA). The following associated countries have aligned themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Iceland has also aligned itself with it.

The European Union has consistently and actively supported the peace process in Guatemala. We welcomed in particular the signing at the end of last year of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace. The European Union also supported the attachment to MINUGUA of 155 military observers to verify the Agreement on a Definitive Ceasefire. We welcome the fact that the verification of the ceasefire began on 3 March 1997, and encourage the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) to continue to cooperate fully with MINUGUA and to fulfil in good faith the commitments they have entered into.

The European Union supports the view that continued international verification is needed for the consolidation of peace and democracy in Guatemala. At the same time, we wish to stress again that the parties themselves have the sole and primary responsibility for the successful implementation of the peace process and the consolidation of a democratic society, based on the rule of law and open to the participation of its citizens, in particular the indigenous population. Further internal consensus-building and constant dialogue between all social, economic and political actors will be of critical importance.

We welcome the efforts by the Government of President Arzú to protect and promote human rights, and call upon both parties to honour all their commitments resulting from the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights. We trust that the policy for the compensation of victims of human rights violations connected with the conflict, foreseen in the Agreement on Human Rights, will be settled by 15 April 1997, as stated in the Agreement for the full implementation of the peace accords of 29 December 1996.

The European Union strongly supports the outcome of the Consultative Group Meeting on Guatemala, which concluded with the international donor community pledging aid totalling some $1.9 billion for project-related activities for the period 1997-2000. Primary importance will be attached to the consolidation of the democratization process and economic and social development for all, as well as better access for and participation by the indigenous population. We are aware of the importance of economic development for the success of the democratization process. The estimated European Union contribution to the peace process in Guatemala for the period 1997-2000 is $250 million.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Jean Arnault as Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Mission in Guatemala, with the important task of monitoring and verifying the implementation of the peace agreements.

The European Union is strongly in favour of the renewal of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA). In our view, the continuation of the work of this Mission, the name of which will be changed to United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala as of 1 April 1997, is of major importance for the full implementation of the peace accords. The five separate verification tasks identified by the Secretary-General in his last report cover the key areas that require attention.

The fact that all the States members of the European Union have sponsored the draft resolution before us illustrates our common trust and hope that a stable and democratic society can be built in Guatemala. We hope the draft resolution can be adopted today by consensus, in order to underline the continued interest and commitment of the international community with regard to the peace process in Guatemala. We urge the parties to do their utmost to use the momentum for the creation of a peaceful and democratic society in order to fulfil the justified expectations of all the citizens of Guatemala.

Mr. Westendorp (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The representative of the Netherlands has just spoken on behalf of the European Union, and my delegation aligns itself fully with his statement. However, I should like to make a few additional comments in view of the steadfast commitment to the Guatemalan peace process that my country shares with the other members of the Group of Friends — a commitment that stands undiminished — and because of our considerable contribution to the United Nations presence in Guatemala.

Draft resolution A/51/L.69, which is before the Assembly for adoption today — by consensus, we trust — will extend by one year, until 31 March 1998, the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA), renaming it the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala. The aim is to carry out the international verification called for in the peace accords.

In taking this decision, the General Assembly will authorize the United Nations to undertake the important task of verifying all the peace agreements between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG). With the exception of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights, which came into effect when signed in March 1994, these agreements entered into force formally and completely at the moment of the signing of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace in Guatemala on 29 December 1996. In this way, the international community will be renewing its active interest in and steadfast commitment to the Guatemalan people, in order to ensure that the efforts of the parties to achieve a firm and lasting peace and to consolidate democracy and a state of law will once and for all take root in that Central American country.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General of 14 March 1997, detailing the revised structure and staffing of MINUGUA, which will make it a versatile tool for the complex verification of the various peace accords. The fact that this restructuring of the Mission can be achieved without any great changes in the field or other substantial alterations demonstrates the importance of the work that it has been doing for years in Guatemala, as well as the excellence of its staff. We are certain that the new Head of MINUGUA, Jean Arnault, will make full use of this tool for verification, good offices and advisory and public-information services. He will always be able to count on the support of Spain in those tasks and on our significant presence in the Mission.

Spain is proud to play an active role in the hopeful new phase in Guatemala's history. A Spanish General commands the MINUGUA military contingent of 155 military observers and medical personnel authorized by Security Council resolution 1094 (1997) to verify the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace. My country is the largest contributor of personnel to that group. We are pleased that the process of verifying the ceasefire, the separation of forces, and the disarming and demobilization of Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) combatants is being carried out in a very positive way and with the full cooperation of the parties. This augurs well for the peace-building in Guatemala.

Madrid was the site of the signing on 12 December 1996, of one of the most important agreements between the parties: the Agreement on the Basis for the Legal Integration of URNG. On that occasion, my Government also sponsored a seminar on reintegration and demobilization in Guatemala. We believe that this crucial aspect of the peace agreements demands the particular attention of the international community, as national reconciliation can take shape only in a climate of solidarity, harmony and development. As the President of the Spanish Government, José María Aznar, stated on the occasion of the signing of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace in Guatemala City on 29 December 1996,

> "Peace is a daily chore that requires many sacrifices. It is the desire to banish the yesterday's hatreds, to understand our opponents' position and to seek the roots of a common future."

We firmly believe that the maturity of the Guatemalan people, which has been evident throughout the peace process, will enable that country to build a common future of liberty and democracy. More than ever, Spain will be at Guatemala's side during this new phase of its history. Spain will both increase significantly its bilateral cooperation and join the efforts of the international community.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): The Government of Guatemala under President Alvaro Arzú and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) have made impressive progress in implementing the Comprehensive Agreement that is transforming their society. It is fitting that we have come here today to renew the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA). Over the course of the next year, MINUGUA will help the Government and the people of Guatemala realize the promise of the agreements that have been signed.

The six substantive and four operational accords that MINUGUA will monitor are the road map for economic, social and political reform in Guatemala. Successful implementation will result in improved respect for human rights and the rule of law, a more open economy, greater integration of the country's majority indigenous

population into national life, and improved living standards for the 80 per cent of the population who live in poverty.

The United States, as a strong supporter of the peace process and a member of the Group of Friends, is certain that MINUGUA is working in the best traditions of the United Nations. For that reason, the United States is proud to co-sponsor this draft resolution. Already, MINUGUA has strengthened civic and governmental institutions which deal with human rights and has provided accurate and unbiased reporting on human rights issues. MINUGUA's presence throughout Guatemala provides needed assistance to victims of abuse. By helping strengthen respect for human rights and end impunity for human rights abusers, MINUGUA is helping eliminate the climate of fear and insecurity which prevailed in Guatemala throughout the 36-year-long civil war.

The United States is confident that Jean Arnault, who moderated intense negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the URNG for the last three years, will lead MINUGUA successfully in this new era. The new, restructured MINUGUA will oversee an unprecedented transformation in the political, legislative, social, economic, agrarian, ethnic, military and public-security life of Guatemala. Many changes, once unthinkable, are already taking place.

Civil-action patrols have been disbanded, and military personnel charged with common crimes will now be tried in civilian courts. URNG leaders have returned to Guatemala to fight for their beliefs, not with bullets, but with ballots. Thousands of URNG guerrillas have taken their first steps on the road to reintegration and turned in their weapons to the military observer contingent attached to MINUGUA. It is vital that this essential element be complied with fully. In April, the Historical Clarification Commission, established as part of the peace accords, will begin its investigation of abuses committed by both sides during the 36-year war.

While much progress has been made, the reconstruction of Guatemala's infrastructure and reconciliation in Guatemalan society will take much more work, time and international support. With the adoption of the draft resolution before us, the members of this body will be giving the Guatemalan people the support they need to build a bright future based on the principles of justice and democracy.

(spoke in Spanish)

I congratulate all of the Guatemalans who are responsible for this success in peace and reconciliation.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): I am pleased to be able to speak on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) and the new, expanded role it is being given in the implementation phase of the Guatemala peace accords. I hope that the draft resolution before us today will be adopted by consensus.

I would like to say first and foremost that Canada appreciates the tremendous efforts of the Guatemalan people and Government to end decades of bitter conflict. The negotiation of the complex package of peace agreements, the last of which was signed on 29 December 1996, justly deserves high praise for the courage and determination shown by all of the parties involved.

With the challenge of negotiating these peace accords behind them, however, we share the Secretary-General's observation that

> "The Guatemalan peace process has entered a new and challenging phase." *(A/51/828, para. 28)*

The diligent implementation of these accords will give the people of Guatemala the opportunity to finally experience the prosperity, development and stability that is their due after so many years of fear and upheaval.

(spoke in English)

Various organs of the United Nations, notably the General Assembly, the Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), have played a significant role throughout the Guatemalan peace process. More recently, my delegation welcomed the authorization by the Security Council of a military observer component for the existing MINUGUA Mission. This was a necessary component of the peace accords themselves, and we believe that the smooth initial functioning of this Mission demonstrates the benefits of close cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council. As post-conflict reconstruction becomes an increasingly important facet of the United Nations work around the world, we hope that the model provided by MINUGUA will serve as a precedent for further examples of

cooperation between the operations authorized by both the Assembly and the Council.

We were also pleased to note that the most recent report of the Secretary-General recommended a continuing and expanded role for MINUGUA, under the name United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, in the implementation of all the peace accords. Not only will the reorientation of the Mission's mandate make it the guarantor of the full implementation phase of the peace process, but it will have been achieved with a negligible increase in the resources required. The renewal period of a full year is also noteworthy, as it recognizes that a society's reconstruction cannot be accomplished overnight; it requires stability and commitment over time.

Mr. Baumanis (Latvia), Vice President, took the Chair.

While there is still much work to be done to consolidate the new-found peace and stability in Guatemala, we believe that the Secretary-General's recommendations for the renewal of MINUGUA constitute a solid base on which the United Nations can help contribute to a renewed sense of public confidence in Guatemala's future.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.69, entitled "United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala".

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/51/L.69 is contained in document A/51/842.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.69?

Draft resolution A/51/L.69 was adopted (resolution 51/198 B).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Martini Herrera (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Government of Guatemala is deeply satisfied by this extension and expansion of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA), which, in accordance with the Secretary-General's recommendations, will be extended for an additional period of one year, until 31 March 1998.

The signature in Guatemala City on 29 December 1996 of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace is the successful culmination of years of patient negotiation and makes official the definitive conclusion of the domestic armed conflict that beset the Guatemalan nation for 36 years. This event clearly marks the beginning of a new era for my country and is the culmination of the peace process in Central America.

The signature of this most recent Agreement makes effective all the previous agreements signed by the parties, which cover complex political, legislative, social, economic, agrarian, ethnic, military and public-security questions.

The MINUGUA mandate, initially limited to human rights aspects, has just been expanded by consensus adoption, making it fully operational and able to address the fulfilment of the important agreements signed: the Framework Agreement on the Resumption of the Negotiating Process, the Agreement on a Timetable for the Negotiation of a Firm and Lasting Peace, the Agreement on Resettlement of Population Groups Uprooted by the Armed Conflict, the Agreement on the Establishment of a Commission to Clarify Past Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence that have Caused the Guatemalan Population to Suffer, the Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation, the Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and on the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society, the Agreement on a Definitive Ceasefire, the Agreement on Constitutional Reforms and the Electoral Regime, the Agreement on the Basis for the Legal Integration of URNG and the Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreement.

The Government of Guatemala wishes again to express its profound gratitude to Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, the United States of America and Venezuela for initially submitting this draft resolution, as well as to the other countries that sponsored it, and for the statements made today. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General, his representatives and other personnel who, in various capacities, are now contributing more than ever to the success of this process through the brilliantly restructured Mission.

Following the signature of the peace Agreement, we must now enter the phase of implementing and fulfilling the commitments undertaken. This calls for an tremendous effort for internal and external investment. The international community's generous backing is a clear indication of genuine support for this process that will make it possible to consolidate the peace that Guatemalans so desire to achieve a truly firm and lasting peace, as we have repeatedly called for in this Hall.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 40.

Agenda item 135 *(continued)*

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/51/504/Add.1)

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee which is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report (A/51/504/Add.1).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/3 B).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 135.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.